

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 DPW-01 NIC-01 /128 R

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APPROVED BY EA: WHSULLIVAN

EA/ VN: LBASKEW

EUR/ WE: RPGALLAGHER

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R 160127 Z MAY 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ROME

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 093102

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, VT, VS

SUBJECT: POPE PAUL RECEIVES VIET CONG DELEGATION

REF: (A) ROME 3781 (B) ROME 2703 (C) STATE 64695

(D) STATE 51556

1. BELIEVE WE SHOULD NOT LET MAY 12 RECEPTION BY POPE PAUL OF PRG REPS HIEU AND LOC PASS WITHOUT EXPRESSION OF USG CONCERN. AT THE VERY LEAST, VATICAN (AND OTHER PARTIES) MAY BE GIVEN FALSE IMPRESSION THAT USG NO LONGER CONCERNED BY SUCH VIET CONG ATTEMPTS AT GAINING INCREASED STATUS.

2. THEREFORE, EVEN THOUGH WE HAD BEEN WARNED SUCH A MEETING INEVITABLE, REQUEST YOU TAKE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT GVN DEMARCHE AND AGAIN MAKE POINTS REFS C AND D. YOU MAY UNDERLINE OUR UNHAPPINESS OVER VATICAN RECEPTION OF VIET CONG AND STRESS OUR VIEW THAT " OBLIGATION" TO SHOW EVIDENCE OF BALANCE DOES NOT REQUIRE DEFERENCE TO
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FACTION IN ARMED DISSIDENCE AGAINST LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN ULTERIOR POLITICAL MOTIVES ARE SO CLEARLY EVIDENT.

3. REGARDING LATTER POINT, FOLLOWING IS EXCERPT FROM EMBASSY SAIGON'S MISSION WEEKLY MAY 9-15, JUST RECEIVED

HERE: BEGIN QUOTE:

HANOI MEDIA REPORTED BROADLY THE PAPAL AUDIENCE GRANTED TO CHIEF VIET CONG NEGOTIATOR NGUYEN VAN HIEU ON MAY 12. A VIET- NAM NEWS AGENCY (VNA) DESPATCH ON MAY 14 SAID THAT HIEU GAVE THE POPE A COPY OF THE VIET CONG' S 6- POINT PROPOSAL AND REPORTED THAT THE POPE, FOR HIS PART, " EXPRESSED SYMPATHY" FOR THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE, PLEDGING HIMSELF " TO STIMULATE MORE ACTIVELY THE TENDENCIES FOR PEACE AND CONCORD." HIEU ALSO " REPORTED" TO THE POPE THE " SERIOUS VIOLATIONS" OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT BY THE US AND GVN. A HANOI RADIO BROADCAST THE DAY BEFORE SAID THAT THE POPE " HIGHLY EVALUATED THE VICTORY IN THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT."

COMMENT: THE COMMUNISTS HAVE TWO GOALS IN MIND IN PRESSING FOR AND PUBLICIZING THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE VATICAN. FIRST, THEY WANT TO STRENGTHEN THEIR IMAGE INTERNATIONALLY AND TO BATHE IN THE GLOW OF RESPECTABILITY WHICH SUCH CONTACTS AFFORD. SECOND, THEY WANT TO PERSUADE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS, WHO ARE BASICALLY ANTI- COMMUNISTS, THAT THE HOLY SEE REGARDS THE VIET CONG NO LESS FAVORABLY THAN THE GVN. INTERESTINGLY, A MAY 14 EDITORIAL IN THE INDEPENDENT BUDDHIST SAIGON DAILY DAN - SONG ALSO SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR A CHANGE IN THE POLICY OF THE VATICAN AND CATHOLICS IN VIET- NAM. " FROM 1954 UP TO THE PRESENT," THE EDITORIAL CLAIMED, " THE CATHOLICS' STAND IS VERY CLEAR: TO SUPPORT THE UNITED STATES IN TERMS OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS AS WELL AS DIPLOMACY AND POLITICS." SINCE US POLICY HAS CHANGED, POLICIES OF THE VATICAN AND VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS " MUST CHANGE ACCORDINGLY". AS ONE INDICATION THAT THE VATICAN' S POLICY MAY HAVE CHANGED, THE EDITORIAL CITES THE FACT THAT " THE VATICAN HAS IN TURN RECEIVED THE CONCERNED VIETNAMESE PARTIES",
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I. E., PRESIDENT THIEU LAST MONTH AND LAST WEEK NGUYEN VAN HIEU. END QUOTE RUSH

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